

Prophets in Mormonism – Part 22

by Marvin W. Cowan

The caption over *Doctrine and Covenants* Section 130 says, “Items of instruction given by Joseph Smith the Prophet, at Ramus, Illinois, April 2, 1843.” But, the *Doctrine and Covenants Student Manual* adds, “This section contains important items of instruction and doctrinal truths which the Prophet Joseph *learned from God by revelation*” (p. 321). So, although Joseph Smith gave the instructions, he “learned [them] from God by *revelation*” and they were canonized as LDS scripture in *Doctrine and Covenants* 130. Smith said in verses 12-13, “I prophesy, in the name of the Lord God, that the commencement of the difficulties which will cause much bloodshed ***previous to the coming of the Son of Man will be in South Carolina. It may probably arise through the slave question.*** This voice declared to me, while I was praying earnestly on the subject, **December 25, 1832.**” Smith declares the *slave question in South Carolina may probably* cause the difficulties and bloodshed leading up to “*the coming of the Son of Man (Christ)*.”

The full text of Smith’s **December 25, 1832** revelation is now *Doctrine and Covenants* 87. LDS often call it “The Civil War Prophecy” and they believe it *proves* Smith was a true prophet. It says,

Verily, thus saith the Lord concerning the wars that will *shortly* come to pass, *beginning at the rebellion of South Carolina*, which will eventually terminate in the death and misery of many souls; And the time will come that *war will be poured out upon all nations beginning at this place*. For behold, the Southern States shall be divided against the Northern States, and the *Southern States will call on other nations, even the nation of Great Britain*, as it is called, and *they shall also call upon other nations, in order to defend themselves against other nations; and then war shall be poured out upon all nations*. And it shall come to pass, *after many days, slaves shall rise up against their masters* and be marshaled and *disciplined for war*. And it shall come to pass also that the *remnants* who are left of the land will marshal themselves, and shall become exceedingly angry, and *shall vex the Gentiles with a sore vexation*. And thus, with the sword and by bloodshed the inhabitants of the earth shall mourn; and with famine and plague, and earthquake, and the thunder of heaven, and the fierce and vivid lightening also, shall the inhabitants of the earth be made to feel the wrath, and indignation, and chastening hand of an Almighty God, until the consumption decreed hath made a **full end of all nations**.
(vs. 1-6)

On **December 25, 1832**, when Smith received this “*revelation*,” he lived in Kirtland, Ohio, next to Painesville, Ohio. Four days **before** Smith’s revelation the *Painesville Telegraph & Geauga Free Press* reprinted excerpts from “The Crisis,” an article originally in the *New York Courier and Enquirer*. It predicted *South Carolina* would soon start a war with the Northern States and also predicted many other things found in Smith’s “prophecy.” Other newspapers predicted similar events as early as *July 1832* when Congress passed a tariff act that was harmful to the

South. On November 24, 1832 South Carolina nullified that tariff act and declared their state was a free and independent nation. Tensions were so high that on **December 10, 1832** President Andrew Jackson sent General Scott with part of the army and a warship to South Carolina and war was expected **then**. So, Smith's prophecy isn't as unique as Mormons think it is.

But most of Smith's predictions in *Doctrine and Covenants* 87 did **not** happen. He said that "**wars** will **shortly** come to pass, *beginning at the rebellion of South Carolina*" and that "war will be poured out upon **all nations**, *beginning at this place*" (South Carolina). Even though the Civil War did begin in South Carolina as expected, **no other war after it had anything to do with South Carolina**. But Joseph Fielding Smith, the 10th LDS Prophet, said that "the Civil War was the beginning of the war that will bring about the *end of the world*" (*Doctrine and Covenants Student Manual*, p. 194). South Carolina *did* call on Great Britain but they **did not** enter the Civil War, nor did they call on other nations in order to defend themselves against other nations as Smith predicted. Nor was war poured out upon *all nations* as a result of the Civil War. And while the Civil War produced more casualties for America than any other war, it did *not* lead to famine, plague, earthquake, thunder and fierce and vivid lightening and "**a full end of all nations**" as verse six predicted.

In verse four Smith said "slaves shall rise up against their masters, who shall be marshaled and disciplined for war." That didn't happen in the USA. The *Doctrine and Covenants Student Manual* says that "slaves" rising up against their masters **may** refer to slaves all over the world, especially in Russia and China (p. 195). But that isn't mentioned in the text, nor did it happen. *Doctrine and Covenants* 130:12-13 shows that it refers to slavery in South Carolina and the Southern states! *Doctrine and Covenants* 87:5 says the "remnants who are left of the land shall marshal themselves and shall become exceedingly angry and shall vex the Gentiles with a sore vexation." Mormons call non-LDS "Gentiles" and the *Doctrine and Covenants Compendium* says the "remnants" are American Indians. But U.S. history shows that it was the Indians who were vexed by white men who put them on reservations.

The *Doctrine and Covenants Student Manual* tries to make Smith's prophecy true by saying that "remnant always refers to a segment of the house of Israel" and **may** mean Indians in Mexico, Central and South America (p. 195). The authors obviously accepted the *Book of Mormon* claim that Indians in the Americas have an Israelite ancestry. However, DNA shows that **all** Indian tribes in the Americas come from **Asian ancestry**. Indians in Central and South America didn't vex white men either, so this was a false prophecy.

Those who want to read more about this prophecy can do so in my book, *Mormon Claims Answered*. Next time we will continue our discussion of *Doctrine and Covenants* 130.